1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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closely paralleling that of their Hindu neighbors. On the other hand, their social organization is relatively lacking in the cleavages of caste which are so prevalent all about them. Apart from the village, which is usually composed of a number of patrilineal kin-groups, territorial organization is weakly developed, and the tribe as a whole has never been politically unified so far as historical records indicate.

Even as a unique people the Santal merit special attention. Numbering today over three million, the region they occupy contains the richest deposits of iron, coal and other crucial industrial minerals in all of India. The chief source of their livelihood, at least since the nineteenth century, has been settled agriculture. Prior to the nineteenth century, hunting was also an important livelihood activity, but the great increase in the region's population and subsequent reduction of forest areas has made game extremely scarce; it is now difficult for the inhabitants even to obtain materials for fuel and building purposes. Though the chief source of food and cash is the annual rice crop, a few vegetables are also grown and some fruit trees maintained. Some villages are near enough to a river for fish to be readily obtained, while some villages stock their local ponds. Even prior to the introduction of modern industry in the region, the Santal had ceased to be economically independent. Although they once did some pottery making, weaving, and even iron smelting, they have come to rely almost exclusively on various local Hindu castes for these material products. Women from several low Hindu castes are used frequently as midwives. While almost no Santal are ritually served by Brahmin priests, itinerant Hindu holy men (*sadhu*) visit many Santal villages, consulting horoscopes and offering prayers for a fee or donation.

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1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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/Jamshedpur/

Introduction

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

464 less time-honored work. The chief industry in which these
[184] others are employed is as characteristically modern as the San-
[241] tal themselves are not. It is the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), the largest and oldest modern iron and steel company in India. Since Santal have been employed by TISCO from its founding over fifty years ago, enough time has elapsed for change to become manifest and for the directions of change to become evident.

Jamshedpur, the industrial town which was created to house TISCO, was carved out of the jungle of Singhbhum district, Bihar, in 1908; it owes its location to the rich natural resources of the surrounding area, in which the Santal and other closely related tribes form a substantial part of the population. The
[161] population of the city has been drawn from every section of India as well as a number of foreign countries and has grown to more than 218,000. Jamshedpur is extremely atypical compared to other Indian cities—the fact that it is a company town of unprecedented size accounts in large measure for its atypicality. TISCO has from the beginning completely controlled the government of the town, provided housing for most of its workers, operated a school system, and furnished other services. It is a city as much dominated by modern industry as a medieval city was by its cathedral. Traditional institutions, such as temples and socio-political organizations, exist but are weakly developed; the Tata Company, the Tata Workers Union, and the town's competing regional and national political parties are the dominant corporate groups. Caste persists
[564] as an institution for regulating marriage, for assigning employment in certain traditionally degrading occupations, and to a
[178] certain extent in structuring social interaction. But class in the traditional Western sense is increasingly displacing caste as the

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

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All then drink this beer.

Thereupon they commence the recitation. How the world was created, and how the Santals have from that time come, feeding like the silk-worm, to the different countries, all this they tell, in order that the children may not forget it. When enumerating this they reach the words "they were scattered here and there", they mention Hikim pargana, the first overchief in the Sikhar country; they say: Hikim pargana said to them: Come along, we shall settle down; I have spied out for us virgin forest, virgin soil. The ancestors said: Come along, let us help him; we shall clear jungle, burning and felling; we shall support ourselves and get a living. Having come together there they joined in marriages; they cleared the jungle, burning and felling; they kept the iṛi and erba seed hidden away in gourd-shells, big and small; what they had sown as iṛi grew up into erba ears; what they had sown as erba grew up into iṛi ears. What they had cleared by burning they would watch, the iṛi and erba ripened; now birds might eat it; then they said: Come, we shall keep watch. The fowls cluck, the lizards nod, and the birds also chirp. Consequently at this time two persons keep watch, husband and wife. They had cleared the jungle at the junction of roads, at the cross-road. They both keep watch; while keeping watch they climb a slanting dry pọpọrọ tree[9] and play; and by the grace of Ṭhạkur the broken grain, the husked grain was not spilled, was not scattered; it came well down from the dry pọpọrọ tree. And when it 'trod' the earth it became religiously, ceremoniously unclean.

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On the day of the pestle, on the day of the mortar we are first; on the day of fire, on the day of flame we are first, at the dug hole with percolated water, at the pool water we are first; at the day of fetching firewood, at the day of fetching leaves we are first; those of you who would not go, these also we made go; let this especially be your grief. (The village people here answer: Those who are grieving have gone to Somae's narrow sloping valley[10], to the fine sand to be crocodile herds.) Now we humbly beseech you village people, from to-day, when we are having the cleansing at birth, the social initiation, we have run into debt, we borrowed at the Suṇḍi house, the Hạḍi house[11]; then we provided, collected (the needful), and then we asked you, invited you to come. Consequently you came on your legs, we received you with our heads, as regards sitting and standing, as regards this also we overlooked and left it half-done: high seats, a high verandah, as regards this also we are lacking and in want. Now we beseech you, on the day of marriage, the day of wedlock, on the day of cleansing at birth, the day of social initiation, the day of dying, the day of death, we shall work and earn to squeeze out the beer, we shall work and earn to draw water, we shall work and earn to stitch the leaves

[9] Pọpọrọ (or more commonly pọ̄pṛọ̄ or pọpṛọ), Gardenia latifolia, Alton. Here fig. about the wife.
[10] Somae sokṛa, acc. to tradition, a place near the sources of the Damuda river. [11] Suṇḍi is the beer-brewing Hindu low-caste; Hạḍi the Hindu low-caste scavenger.

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31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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MAYURBHANJ
SANTAL PARGANAS

Nij-Hansdak's along with a Ṭikà Murmu, (the Santal equivalent for a Brahmin for such purposes), for ceremonial expiation of the erring soul. It is on payment of Rs. 1-4as., a cup of bell-metal and a napkin (to be received by the Ṭikà Murmu) that he can be restored to his clan. 614 688 627

Fourthly, we should note that Santals, although divided into so many clans and sub-clans, do not observe any caste-system as the Hindus. Although the *Murmus* are called *Ṭhàkurs* and are generally selected as priests of the tribe (in preference to others), they dine with any one within the tribal fold and marry anywhere within the permitted grades. But it is not the custom of the Santal to take rice or water from the *Dekos* (non-Santals). Although in course of time, some clans claim some superiority over others, no rigours of castes are noticeable. But as we have observed before, the same does not hold good with regard to non-Santals. Santal boys and girls, after their marriage, are prohibited by strict regulation from dining with the Dekos excepting the Kurmbis, Hos and Bhumij. Thus they maintain, by means of a rigorous taboo, their purity from defilement. 614 564 • [793] [784]

In conclusion, we should note that we questioned the Santals of the Santal Paraganas regarding marriage within the clan (viz. including all the various sub-clans). The educated Santals said that 614

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the tables may be turned on those who lord it over them. In Bodding's collection of the Folk-Tales[1] there are two stories which turn on the fact that the bodies of high-caste strangers house the souls of animals, while the bodies of men of low caste house human and beautiful souls. (The means by which the real person can be discerned is to look at him through the wing feather of a vulture.) In common with other tribes of their group and many primitive peoples in other parts of the world, the Santals refer to themselves as "men" (*hor*). A Santal once said in reply to a direct question as to whether any other race was superior to his: "No, there are no others who are greater than us. You can see that from the fact that even today our womenfolk will not eat rice that has been cooked by Brahmins. Formerly, when our menfolk ate Hindu rice they were made to sleep outside for one night; they could not sleep with their wives. When they brought rice from outside to the house they were made to eat it in the courtyard and clean up the place where they had eaten, and then wash their own eating utensils." Many Santals work as day labourers in the fields of well-to-do caste Hindus and receive payment in grain or sometimes in cooked food. The cooks in the homes of their employers are Brahmins, and so by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmin they hold themselves aloof from the Hindu social structure. Nevertheless, the complete aloofness of former days has been modified and is maintained only by the women. As one might expect, Santals share with others abhorrence of social customs which do not agree with their own standards of morality, and they exaggerate the iniquities practised by other peoples. The same person said: "When the *Deko* put out their lamps at night they have no sense of what is right and wrong. They respect no one, whether their younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife, their own sister or anyone else. Moreover, they do not respect any of their relations by marriage."

Many of the *Deko* make a living out of the Santal, as the cat finds its sustenance in his home. The analogy is by no means perfect, and its chief value for the Santal is that it ministers to his self-respect. In the Bankura district many of the landlords of the Santals are Sundis, who are themselves classified as an Exterior or Scheduled caste. Their hereditary occupation is the distilling and selling of spirits, and they are usually the lessees of the government liquor and drug shops. They owe their present

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, Nos. 74 and 77.